

EXTRA! EXTRA!
Father Chuck 'Retires'

THE SOUTHERN CROSS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF SAN DIEGO

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Father Chuck's Many Roles Leave a Mark

Newspaper editor retires after legendary career

By Denis Grasska

SAN DIEGO – Father Chuck Fuld's tour of duty as managing editor of *The Southern Cross* has come to an end.

After 12 years in charge of San Diego's diocesan newspaper, Father Chuck, as he's known, officially retired on Nov. 4, his 87th birthday. For the retired Naval officer and twice-retired parish pastor, this was his fourth and presumably his last retirement.

Father Chuck was certainly a unique figure in the annals of publishing. Not a professional journalist, he would be the first to admit that spelling and grammar were not his strong suits. As he often put it, "My spelling ain't so good."

He saw his role as primarily that of an advocate for both the publisher, the bishop of San Diego, and for the average reader.

Did a particular story reflect the bishop's perspective on a given topic? Was an article written in a way that spoke to the typical Catholic in the pews, or was it packed with so much Church jargon or esoteric concepts that it required an advanced degree in theology to decipher? These were the questions that Father Chuck asked himself every time he reviewed an article submitted for his consideration.

But, by and large, Father Chuck's leadership style was that of a delegator, not a micromanager. When he had an idea for a cover story or a "center-spread," he enthusiastically

provided the big picture, but often gave his subordinates the freedom to fill in the details.

He respected the talents and abilities of those who worked for him, often deferring to their judgment and almost always giving them plenty of space to exercise their creativity.

As managing editor, Father Chuck had a soft spot for priestly vocations, the military, the Boy Scouts, and the Knights of Columbus. Members of these constituencies knew that they had a friend at the paper.

"He was often looking for articles about the seminary ... and I think that's because of his commitment to vocations," said Father Matt Spahr, rector of St. Francis de Sales House of Priestly Formation.

There was a running joke between Father Chuck and Father Spahr about how frequently photos of the latter should appear in the paper.

"Despite all of the accolades (Father Chuck) rightfully should receive, his failure to get me in *The Southern Cross* was notable," Father Spahr said with tongue in cheek.

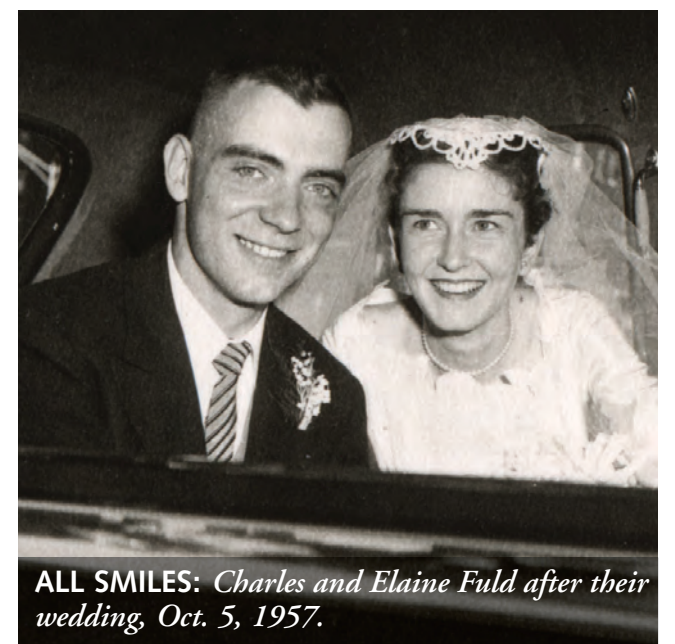
A widowed father of three children – Linda, Michael and Theresa – before entering the seminary, Father Chuck's affiliation with the Boy Scouts preceded his priesthood. He was actively involved in Scouting, initially as a Scout leader.

In the years between retiring from the U.S. Navy as a full commander in late 1976, after a nearly 22-year career that included service during the Vietnam War, and his

entrance into the seminary as a delayed vocation, he served as a district executive for the Boy Scouts and editor of the San Diego-Imperial Council's publication, the *Beaver Log*. His years of service to Scouting were eventually recognized with the Silver Beaver Award.

A member of the Knights of Columbus since 1992, Father Chuck served as the chaplain for Ascension Council 7902 and, from 2008-2009, as chaplain for the

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ALL SMILES: Charles and Elaine Fuld after their wedding, Oct. 5, 1957.

VOICES

'You have brought many gifts to this ministry'

As you retire from your leadership of *The Southern Cross*, I want to thank you profoundly for your dedication to the service of God in the ministry of communication during this particularly difficult time in the life of the Church and society.

There are many gifts that you have brought to this ministry – energy and enthusiasm, faith and hope, a love for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But the gift of particular importance that you have brought to the position of editor of our diocesan newspaper lies in the fact that you have always understood this ministry as a pastoral action. You have continually kept the people of God at the center of every decision you have made, every initiative you have undertaken, every priority that you have pursued. You came to *The Southern Cross* as a former pastor, and you have constantly demonstrated the heart and wisdom of a pastor in promoting a newspaper that touches the lives of people in the depths of their souls.

I know that I join Bishop Dolan and Bishop Bejarano, your brother priests, all of your collaborators in the newspaper and the Pastoral Center staff in giving to you our congratulations, our deepest gratitude and our admiration.

Bishop Robert W. McElroy

'Always on a mission'

Father Chuck is such a joyful spirit! It was not uncommon to see him walking happily down the halls of the Pastoral Center with a skip or two, humming a song as he visited offices with the "hot off the press" *Southern Cross* newspaper. While he was "there" he would casually ask how things were going. We all know he was always on the lookout for a new story to include in *The Southern Cross*! He was always on a mission to find stories and share them with our readers. Now, he will begin to write a new story, one that he has yearned to write for quite some time. Happy retirement, Father Chuck! We will miss you. Blessings as you begin this new chapter!

"Marioly" Galván, Chancellor

'It's been a great run'

Who would have known that after one year with Chuck at St. Francis Seminary in 1982 our paths would continue to overlap for many years to come. In 1990, we both arrived at St. Mark Parish in San Marcos, he as associate pastor and I as DCM. A few months later, I was hired at the diocesan Pastoral Center only to see him assigned as director of Communications a few months after that. When I started attending Resurrection Parish in Escondido, he had been named pastor months earlier. In 1999, I moved to Ascension Parish in Tierrasanta and in 2003 he came out of retirement to become pastor there. Just when I thought we would finally go our separate ways, as he neared his second retirement in 2008, he was appointed editor of *The Southern Cross*. It's been a great run and friendship which I hope will continue for many years to come.

Rodrigo Valdivia, Vice Moderator of the Curia

'He set high expectations'

Readers of the newspaper see a collection of stories, columns and photos. As a member of Father Chuck's staff, I see the results of his leadership: unwavering dedication to his staff, tireless service to the diocese, and, most of all, love for his Church. He hired me as a part-time writer for the section in Spanish for *The Southern Cross*. He set high expectations for me. And every month he trusted me to meet them, despite not being able to read Spanish. I have been blessed to be on the receiving end of that trust. To Father Chuck: Thank you for sharing your great gifts with us.

Aida Bustos, writer, The Southern Cross

'One of the best decisions'

For many years I have teased Father Chuck that hiring me was one of the best decisions he ever made! Truly, for me it was, as I found God and a wonderful mirror of His truth in Father Chuck.

Donna Lightsey, advertising/office coordinator, The Southern Cross



LASTING MEMORIES: Father Chuck Fuld is seen in 1) a recent family photo; 2) reunited with long-lost brothers Robert Mate, left, and Joseph McDonough, right; 3) at his 85th birthday party with Msgr. Joseph "Father Joe" Carroll; 4) reading his favorite publication during a quiet moment at the Adams Memorial Shakespearean Theatre in Cedar City, Utah, in July 2014; 5) with priest friends Father Ron Buchmiller, left, and Msgr. Richard Duncanson, center; 6) and with Assistant Editor Denis Grasska on Halloween in 2011.

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Father Chuck was a pastoral, fatherly figure for his staff

California State Council.

Robert Villalobos, the former California State Deputy of the Knights of Columbus who invited Father Chuck to serve alongside him as state chaplain, described his friend as "a great example and a true Knight of Columbus."

"When he became the editor of *The Southern Cross* ... he never forgot us," said Villalobos. "His articles were always great."

Born in New York City and raised by adoptive par-

ents in the Bronx, Father Chuck was not only an atypical newspaper editor. He also took a unique path to the priesthood.

"His faith wasn't very strong until he met my mother," said his daughter, Linda Gordon.

Father Chuck's wife, Elaine, had come from a devout Irish Catholic family and the future priest knew that he would need to become more serious about his faith if he was to marry her.

His daughter said his faith grew stronger after his wife's sudden death in 1969 after almost 12 years of marriage, with active parish involvement, and through leading a Catholic parish-affiliated Scout troop.

Gloria Gibbons, his wife's sister-in-law, became one of Father Chuck's dearest friends. Gibbons and her hus-

band took in Father Chuck's children weeks after Elaine's funeral when Father Chuck had to leave for a six-month deployment.

Over the decades that would follow, Gibbons was "his biggest support," his daughter said. They spoke regularly and would bounce ideas off of one another.

Father Chuck entered St. Francis Seminary in 1981, after all of his children had reached adulthood. He was ordained to the priesthood on July 12, 1986, at age 52.

Father Chuck's rich personal history would provide material for the many perspectives pieces he wrote for *The Southern Cross*. Nostalgic stories about his experiences as a parent appeared in the paper, always with the disclaimer that he had his children before he became a priest.

Father Chuck actually had two separate tours of duty with the newspaper.

The first was as assistant publisher from early November 1992 through late June 1995, a period that overlapped with his almost nine years as pastor of Resurrection Parish in Escondido, his longest pastoral assignment.

It was during this first stint at *The Southern Cross* that Father Chuck hired Donna Lightsey, who now serves as advertising and office coordinator for the paper and at 27 years is its longest-serving employee.

Father Chuck had previously served as the director of the diocese's Office of Communications for a period of 10 months in 1992.

The spring of 2008, when then Bishop Robert H. Brom tapped Father Chuck to return as managing editor, was a tumultuous time for the paper. Just a year earlier, the Diocese of San Diego had reached a \$198-million settlement for its sexual abuse lawsuits, necessitating budget cuts and staff reductions.

The paper's longtime editor had recently left to work at another publication. He was succeeded by his longtime associate editor, but she too would leave after only a few months at *The Southern Cross*' editor's desk. Amidst this upheaval and uncertainty, entered Father Chuck.

Perhaps it was because of his qualities as a father and grandfather, or maybe it was his pastoral experience at local parishes, but Father Chuck easily continued the



family-like atmosphere that had long characterized life at *The Southern Cross*.

With his family at the paper, Father Chuck celebrated many milestones, including concelebrating Lightsey's wedding.

It was also during his years at the paper that Father Chuck discovered that his biological family was larger than he realized. In June 2013, he was contacted at the paper by Robert Mate, a brother he never knew he had, who lives in New Jersey. Two years later, the reunited brothers learned that they had another sibling, Joseph McDonough of South Carolina. These were joyful discoveries that he shared with the staff.

Though Father Chuck never had a knack for foreign languages, he recognized the demographics of the San Diego Diocese and desired that *The Southern Cross* might better serve the Hispanic Catholic population.

He successfully lobbied then Bishop Cirilo Flores for permission to restore the paper's Spanish-language section, which gradually grew to its present-day size, an eight-page standalone supplement. It is one of his enduring legacies as managing editor.

Whether in English or Spanish, it's hard to explain just how special Father Chuck is and how sorely he will be missed.

He is certainly one of a kind.

The Southern Cross

'I am incredibly grateful'

I've known Father Chuck since we entered the seminary together in 1981. I was in awe of him. Here I was, entering the seminary right out of high school, having all the life experience you would expect of an 18-year-old college freshman, and there was Chuck, a father of three, an accomplished Naval officer who served his country for 22 years and a widower whose wife, Elaine, had passed away 10 years before.

Almost 40 years later, I'm still in awe of him.

He served his Church. He served his family. He mentored hundreds of young men through his devotion to the Boy Scouts and hundreds more through his service to the Knights of Columbus, including a term as their statewide chaplain. If that wasn't enough, he also served as a chaplain to the men and women of the San Diego County Sheriff's Department, embracing and ministering to deputies and their families through triumph and tragedy.

On Nov. 4, Father Chuck will retire for the fourth (and probably final) time, the same day he celebrates his 87th birthday. Words can't express the mark he has made on the Church in San Diego, nor on my own life and ministry. All I can say is that I am incredibly grateful for the kindness he has shown me over the years and I hope he is able to enjoy a long, happy and fulfilling retirement.

Auxiliary Bishop John Dolan

'We knew he had our backs'

Twelve years ago, when Father Chuck arrived as "the new boss," I had been working for *The Southern Cross* for three years already.

Change is scary, and I wasn't sure what to expect. Little could I have imagined the warm, fatherly figure who would take command. Before I knew it, we were all one happy work family with Father Chuck as the paterfamilias.

He may have been a retired Navy man with experience giving orders. But, from my perspective, he's the sort of person who recognizes his employees' talents, appreciates their contributions, and trusts their instincts enough to let them approach their assignments in their own ways.

It was clear that Father Chuck cared about each of us as individuals. We weren't just cogs in a machine to him, and we knew he had our backs. He graced us with his good humor and cultivated an environment where our work – as important as it is – was never expected to overwhelm our personal, family and social lives.

Thanks for everything, Father Chuck!

Denis Grasska, assistant editor, The Southern Cross

'One of the most trusted friends'

Father Chuck, I consider you to be one of two most trusted friends in the priesthood. You have always been most supportive and encouraging. I admire your many years of faithful ministry, in parishes and to the people of San Diego through *The Southern Cross*. I pray you will have many years of health and continued ministry. You deserve a break from the pressures of deadlines and budgets. May our Great God bless, protect and keep you!

Father Ron Buchmiller

'Tremendous work ethic'

Though I will miss Father Chuck's playful smile and his tremendous work ethic, what I will miss the most is when he celebrates Mass in the Pastoral Center Chapel and says, "It is a delight to be with you here today."

Noreen McInnes, Director of Office for Liturgy and Spirituality

'Made me feel welcomed'

Just a few days after my ordination to the priesthood I arrived at Resurrection Parish in Escondido. Father Chuck was the pastor and my first boss. I had never met a priest who had been married, a widower, father and grandfather. From the moment we met, Father Chuck made me feel welcomed and put me at ease. For two years he was my mentor and taught me how to be a priest and pastor. Beyond those two formative years he has remained a faithful friend and a brother to me. I am deeply grateful for his witness to Christ and for his joyful service.

Father Edmundo Zárate, pastor of St. Jude Shrine of the West and St. Anthony parishes

On the Road with Father Chuck? Keep These Rules in Mind

First, I have known Chuck since 1984. He was a couple of years ahead of me in theology at St. Patrick's Seminary in Menlo Park. We have been blessed by God with the friendship we have shared. We have been to many different places in the world that I never would have imagined going to if it had not been for Chuck. Some of his most endearing qualities are his kindness, loyalty and his sense of humor. He has always made God, his children, our country and the parishes he has served his priorities. Many, many people have been blessed by his dedication, faithfulness and love.



Father Michael Sinor

Here are a couple of stories that I enjoy telling about Chuck.

Chuck and I were on vacation and one of the places we went to was Lake Tahoe. Rule No. 1 when you are with Chuck, don't let him drive! #*%! He is aptly labeled the "Mr. Magoo" of California highways. But I digress. We had made a reservation for a hotel near Tahoe. When we got there, we were surprised to see a great many police and Highway Patrol vehicles in the parking lot. We came to realize that this particular hotel was often used for meetings and gatherings of law enforcement officers.

As we were checking-in, the desk clerk was sizing us up. The clerk finished processing our registrations and quietly asked us, "Are you guys FBI?" Before I had a chance to answer, Chuck calmly replied, "We can't really talk about that."

Rule No. 2 with Chuck: Don't go to a musical he either knows or doesn't know. If it is a musical like "Les Miserables," which



PILGRIMAGE: Fathers Michael Sinor and Chuck Fuld celebrate Mass in Corinth, Greece, on Oct. 11, 2012.

he dearly loves, he will sing along with the cast throughout the performance. And it is not a whisper. Theater patrons (emphasis on the plural) have turned around and given us hateful, scornful, and indignant stares as well as some threatening words warning him to be silent.

If he books the tickets and doesn't know the musical, you can pretty well count on walking out before the end of the show because it is so bad.

Father Chuck is very pastoral. One time he and I led a pilgrimage to Rome and vari-

ous other parts of Italy. We took turns being the presider for the Eucharist each day during the trip. One day we had the privilege of celebrating Mass at St. John Lateran, the Cathedral of the Bishop of Rome.

I was the main celebrant of the Mass. But before we began the Mass, Father Chuck decided to give general absolution to everyone

in our group. He meant well. After Mass, I explained to him that he could only give general absolution in extreme or unusual situations and, secondly, he was required to write a letter to the bishop of the diocese where he granted this privilege, explaining the circumstances and the need. Of course, the bishop of Rome happens to be the pope. You might want to ask him if he ever wrote that letter!

Father Chuck, Dad Chuck, Grandfather Chuck and Great-Grandfather Chuck are all the same man. He has had one of the most interesting lives I have ever known. Father Chuck was an orphan, was adopted by a couple whose first language was German, set out into the world by himself after his adoptive parents died when he was a teenager, put himself through New York University, met his wife, Elaine, while they were both working in a Lowes Theatre in the Bronx, joined the Navy and served as an officer, fought in Vietnam, served as a leader in the Boy Scouts and edited their newspaper, retired and raised his kids after Elaine died, got a graduate degree in psychology, entered the seminary after his kids were old enough to make their own way, reunited with brothers he didn't even know he had when he was 78 years old, and was ordained and served the Diocese of San Diego for over 34 years. He has lived an extraordinary life. And he is an extraordinary man with faith in God through all the sorrows and joys he has experienced in his great life.

Father Michael Sinor is Director of Spiritual Formation at the St. Francis House of Priestly Formation.

Father Chuck's Successful Careers are No 'Surprise' Given His Qualities

Father Chuck Fuld's retirement comes as something of a surprise, because he always seems so enthusiastic and excited about his media ministry as the managing editor of our diocesan newspaper, *The Southern Cross*.



Msgr. Richard Duncanson

This is not his first retirement, but at age 87 it might well be his last one so that now he can finally enjoy some years of rest and relaxation with his family and friends. In recent years, his family has grown in a most amazing way, as Father Chuck has been reunited with two long-lost brothers whom he had never before even known about. The family resemblance is extraordinary. These three men are clearly brothers! And there's no hint of sibling rivalry, but lots of sibling revelry it seems.

Throughout his life, Father Chuck has exhibited some wonderful qualities, among them perseverance and flexibility. Originally planning to become a Naval aviator, he shifted gears and went instead into hard-hat deep sea diving and salvage. As a Naval officer he raised

his family and was actively involved at St. Charles Parish in Imperial Beach. After the death of his wife, he felt called to the priesthood and entered the seminary, showing amazing flexibility in participating in the program of priestly formation with young men, most of whom were half his age.

After retiring from the Navy but before entering the seminary, Father Chuck had a brief career as an executive with the Boy Scouts of America. The local council published its own newspaper, and he was the editor. Little did he know then that this would be the precursor of his last priestly assignment as the managing editor of our diocesan newspaper.

Through the years, I have especially enjoyed being invited to Father Chuck's "surprise" birthday parties. He plans these parties for himself every year; the big surprise is not knowing for sure if he will invite you. And his birthday gifts are never for himself because he sends them all to Father Joe Carroll to give to the poor. Looks like this year his surprise party will be his retirement party. Enjoy it, Father Chuck. You certainly deserve it!

Msgr. Richard Duncanson is a retired priest of the Diocese of San Diego.

Father Chuck Is an Example of Living Priesthood with True Joy

I have had the great blessing of being a part of Father Chuck's priests' support group for over 27 years. I came to the group as a brand-new priest and though I had known him as a seminarian, I had the opportunity to get to know him on a whole new level. I could never have known at the time what a gift it would be to my own priesthood to get to know Father Chuck and to benefit from his supportive presence in my life. When I think of the support I have received from Chuck, I think of joy, fraternity and dedication.



Father Matthew Spahr

Chuck has always been an example to me of living one's priesthood with a sense of true joy. Over these many years, there have been plenty of support group gather-

ings when I felt discouraged or worn down. Chuck's infallible and usually corny sense of humor, despite the challenges of the moment, never failed to pick me up and served as an example of Christian joy. He has also been an example of priestly fraternity, never failing to check in to ask how things were going or sending a card or email at just the right time.

Finally, I have continually been inspired by Chuck's dedication to whatever ministry was entrusted to him, by his love for those he served, and his desire to be the best priest he could be. Over the years, we have celebrated a number of Chuck's "retirements," but like the Energizer Bunny he just keeps going and going. That, too, has been an inspiration for me and I look forward to his continued presence and support in my life and the lives of so many others.

Father Matthew Spahr serves as Rector of the St. Francis House of Priestly Formation.